

Age-adjusted Mortality: United States and North Carolina

Table 1 provides U.S. and N.C. rates for 1977 with corresponding percent changes since 1973. For total deaths and the five leading causes, U.S. and N.C. race-sex trends are depicted in Figures 1-6. These graphs use the logarithmic scale in order to depict the relative (as opposed to absolute) changes in death rates.

Age-adjusted Mortality: North Carolina Health Service Areas and Counties

Table 2 shows HSA total adjusted rates for 1978 and percent changes since 1973. These rates show the greatest differences among HSA's to involve excessive nonwhite mortality in the Southern Piedmont and excessive white mortality in the Cardinal. In general, there exists some tendency towards an inverse relationship between white and nonwhite mortality, e.g., the three easternmost HSA's are experiencing above-average white mortality and below-average nonwhite mortality.

Examining cause-specific mortality among the HSA's, Table 3 lists an HSA if its 1974-78 cause-race-sex-specific rate exceeded the corresponding N.C. rate by 10% or more. Single-year HSA data for the period are also available.

For counties, five-year total age-adjusted rates for race-sex groups are depicted in Figure 7 where counties are grouped according to quintile. Counties at the upper end of a range of death rates should carefully consider the present analysis and request their own cause-specific data in order to ferret out the causes of excessive mortality in one or more race-sex groups.

Table 2
1978 Age-adjusted Death Rates with Percent Changes
Since 1973, Race-sex Groups
N.C. Health Service Areas

HSA	Race and Sex							
	White Male		White Female		Nonwhite Male		Nonwhite Female	
	1978	Percent Change	1978	Percent Change	1978	Percent Change	1978	Percent Change
Western	799.5	-10.6	399.5	-13.9	1135.8	-17.3	702.4	-20.3
Piedmont	814.4	-12.4	404.1	-14.2	1246.7	- 9.1	655.9	-20.4
Southern Piedmont	817.1	-10.2	400.7	-12.8	1359.7	+ 1.3	723.2	-16.7
Capital	922.6	- 5.4	432.3	- 9.4	1147.3	-13.9	549.1	-23.9
Cardinal	947.6	-12.3	457.7	-15.1	1155.4	-18.9	620.2	-25.2
Eastern	916.9	-11.4	453.7	-13.7	1192.5	-12.4	621.8	-18.3
North Carolina	850.9	-11.0	418.9	-13.4	1201.9	-12.1	631.0	-20.9

Discussion

Due to the variability often associated with small numbers, some counties—especially western counties—may have abnormally high or low rates, especially non-white rates. This is the case with high nonwhite male rates in Mitchell and Cherokee and the high nonwhite female rate in Alleghany. Otherwise, age-adjusted rates by county and cause—available for the asking—should help researchers and others to "zero in" on the particular mortality risks of race-sex groups in local areas.